

MHawaii MARINE

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THOMAS JEFFERSON AWARD WINNING METRO FORMAT NEWSPAPER

JANUARY 26, 2007



‘Lava Dogs’
A3



Hula
B1



Basketball
C1



Lance Cpl. Ryan R. Jackson

Marines from Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune's (Jacksonville, N.C.) operational forces participate in MV-22 "Osprey" Marine Air Ground Task Force integration training Jan. 17. Marines received a brief describing aircraft capabilities before flying in it.

Marines experience ‘Osprey’ operational muscle, ability

Lance Cpl. Ryan R. Jackson

Marine Corps Air Station New River

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. — Marines from Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune's operational forces had the chance to experience the capabilities of the MV-22 "Osprey" firsthand during MV-22 Marine Air Ground Task Force integration training Jan. 17.

Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 263 provided air support for approximately 250 Marines from 2nd Marine Division, 2nd Marine Logistics Group and 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force. Each Marine received a period of military education on the aircraft and its capabilities and later flew familiarization flights aboard an Osprey.

Most Marines have never seen the MV-22 in person, but among those who have, only a handful have had the opportunity to fly in it, said Lance Cpl. Jon P. Ripp, landing support specialist with Transport Support Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 6.

"It was fascinating being up in the Osprey for the first time," added the native of Sackets Harbor, N.Y. "A lot of Marines think it's still experimental, which we learned today it's not. I would trust the Osprey because the bird can pick up and get out of a (landing zone) a lot faster if you were being attacked."

Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 263 is the first MV-22 squadron to become operational. Under Marine Aircraft Group 26 planning, preparation and

See OSPREY, A-6



Cpl. Luke Blom

Marines from Hawaii-based 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, conduct a security patrol through a street in the Al Anbar province of Iraq. Marines and Sailors assigned to 2/3, who were assigned to Regimental Combat Team 7, I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), will now be assigned to RCT-2 for the duration of their tour in Iraq.

California-based regiment leaves Iraq a better place

Sgt. Roe F. Seigle

Regimental Combat Team 7

AL ASAD, Iraq — For nearly a year, Marines in Iraq's western Al Anbar province have recruited thousands of Iraqi police officers, improved security in cities like Haditha, Al Qa'im and Hit and are

leaving Al Anbar province better than they received it, according to one senior Marine official.

"We have accomplished the initial mission that was handed to us – and that was to train and equip Iraqi Security Forces," said Lt. Col Christopher Dowling, operations officer, Regimental Combat Team 7.

The Twentynine Palms, Calif.-based regiment is the Coalition Forces unit that has spent the past 12 months in western Al Anbar province, where U.S. forces faced some of the fiercest fighting in Iraq while recruiting and training Iraqi Security Forces.

See BETTER, A-5

‘Easy Riders’ Detachment 2 returns from Philippines

Lance Cpl. Edward C. deBree

Combat Correspondent

Approximately 20 Sailors assigned to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light 37, Detachment 2, Commander Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing 2, returned to Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, from deployment Jan. 17.

Detachment 2 squadron members returned to K-Bay after a 4-month deployment to the Pacific Region where they served in support of Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines.

"It's nice to return home to family and friends," said Lt. Cmdr. Christopher Westphal, officer-in-charge. "Deployments are professionally rewarding, but it's personally rewarding to come home."

During their deployment the detachment provided intelligence surveillance reconnaissance support for anti-terrorist and maritime operations in the region.

"We went to Malaysia, Japan, Micronesia and Guam three times during this deployment," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Kenny Zhen, aviation machinist's mate. "We were all supporting anti-terrorist operations in the Philippines."

"We were also doing our (community relations) part by fixing schools and building communication with these countries," he continued.

"I absolutely loved this deployment," Zhen admitted. "I had a great opportunity to see these countries and see their cultures – something that I would have never been able to see otherwise. It also allowed me to experience being on ships that I've never been on before."

Westphal said being aboard ship created many challenges for the "Easy Riders." Due to the size of the ship they were on, Sailors had to fly in extra support equipment in from Japan and Taiwan. The Sailors also performed duties aboard the ship that they would not normally be assigned to do. According to the 35-year-old native of Albuquerque, N.M., the Sailors performed these duties in an outstanding manner.

"They performed superbly," said Westphal. "They overcame numerous logistical challenges ... fulfilling duties that they really weren't trained for."



Commanders, community leaders donate books to Mokapu Elementary

Lance Cpl. Edward C. deBree

Combat Correspondent

More than 100 books were donated to Mokapu Elementary School Jan. 17 in an effort to ensure students have a variety of books to read.

Military commanders from the island of Oahu as well as civilian leaders from the local communities and government offices donated the books during a holiday event held at the home of Brig. Gen. Steven A. Hummer, commanding general, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, and his wife, Sheri, Jan. 7.

"I met many of the people who donated these books," said Annette Ostrem, principal, Mokapu Elementary School. "They were all Marine Corps personnel and community leaders committed to the children at Mokapu Elementary School."

"I was surprised to hear that the books were being donated and the variety that we were getting," she said. "These are going to serve our children from preschool up to the sixth grade."

Some books included in the donation included "Charlotte's Web," "The Giving Tree," "The Children's Dictionary," and an autographed copy of "The War in the Pacific," signed by author Jerome T. Hagen. Books ranged from classic children's books like those written by Dr. Seuss to a book written by Vice President Dick Cheney's wife, Lynne.

According to Ostrem, the donated books provide additional reading material for the students and will be put in a special place in the school's library.

See BOOKS, A-6



Lance Cpl. Edward C. deBree

Mokapu Elementary School principal Annette Ostrem poses with 5th grader Kate Donnellan, 3rd grader Elizabeth Donnellan and 1st grader Marie Donnellan, Jan. 17, who hold books that were donated to the school. More than 100 books were donated to the school by base commanders on Oahu and civilian leaders of surrounding communities.

News Briefs

EOD mobile screening team to visit

The EOD mobile screening team will be on Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Monday and Camp H.M. Smith Tuesday.

Marines interested in being considered for the EOD should contact MCB Hawaii EOD at 257-7112 to see if they meet the prerequisites.

Marine Corps Base Hawaii Tax Center

The center is open now thru April 17 for those who would like to have their taxes done by the professionals. The center will be open for appointments and walk-ins Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The center is located on the second floor of Building 279. Call 257-4829 for directions and information.

If you are coming to the center to have your taxes done, bring:

- W2 Forms
- Bank account number and Bank's routing number
- Copy of last year's tax return
- All other tax forms (1099s, etc.)

Manpower Management Enlisted Assignments Monitors to Visit

Manpower Management Enlisted Assignments monitors from U.S. Marine Corps Headquarters, Quantico, Va., will arrive on Oahu for their annual visit Jan. 29 and 30. The purpose of the visit is to entertain duty assignment requests from enlisted Marines and their spouses and also to provide educational briefs aimed at enhancing a Marine's career opportunities.

There will be Career Briefs Jan. 29 at the Base Theater, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, and at Camp H.M. Smith Jan 30 during which MMEA will provide information, such as, performance evaluation, career development updates, and Marine Security Guard Duty.

Appointments are on a first-come, first-serve basis and will be kept to a 10- to 15-minute time frame in order to allow maximum participation. Spouses are highly encouraged to accompany their Marine during the interviews and briefs

Contact your unit career planner for details.

KOSC Annual Art Auction

All Hands are invited to the KOSC Annual Art Auction Feb. 24 from 6 to 10 p.m. at the Officers' Club aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay. The auction will begin with an art preview and pupus at 6 p.m. with the auction beginning at 7 p.m. For more information and tickets, contact Sherry at k-bayartauction@hotmail.com.

2007 Chief Doris Brewster Scholarship

The Hickam African-American Heritage Association is proud to announce the acceptance of applications for the 2007 Chief Doris Brewster Scholarship. This scholarship is open to all high school seniors who are dependents of active duty or retired military personnel who meet the minimum requirements to graduate from a high school in Hawaii.

Further information concerning AAHA and recurring activities may be directed to Senior Master Sgt. Darlene Johnson at 448-2209 ext. 251.

Important Phone Numbers:

On-Base Emergencies	911
Military Police	257-7114
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Business Management Hotline	257-3188
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110
MCBH Duty Chaplain	257-7700

Hawaii MARINE

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Some of our finest

Sergeant Christopher Olinger, (left) Headquarters Battalion, recipient of the Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter award; Lance Cpl. Tyler Gilbert, Marine Corps Air Facility, recipient of the Marine of the Quarter award; Petty Officer 1st Class Thomas McGee, representative from Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing 2 who accepted the Marine Corps Base Hawaii Commander's Cup for Intramural Sports; and Sgt. Michael Sanders and Gunnery Sgt. Maurice Cork, Headquarters Battalion representatives, who accepted the Commanding General's Fitness Series Races Trophy and the Commanding General's Overall Perpetual Trophy pose for a group photo after an awards ceremony aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Jan. 19.



Christine Cabalo

Changes in base orders affect driving regulations, punishments

Cpl. Mark Fayloga

Combat Correspondent

With the recent implementation of Base Order P5500.15B Chapter 2, an order which governs base regulations, new changes to driving regulations as well as punishment for driving violations are currently in effect.

In addition to those changes, individual units will each have their own magistrate and traffic liaisons.

Currently there is one base magistrate to handle all violations.

Soon each unit will have a magistrate to adjudicate violations of their own personnel.

"The change was made so that the tenant commanders have more visibility on offenders," said Master Sgt. Dean Jordan, services chief, Military Police Department, Provost Marshals Office. "Unit leaders (E-8 and above) will be taking over as magistrates for their own units."

According to Jordan, nonmilitary violators will still appear before the base magistrate.

Unit magistrates attended training about the Marine Corps Base Hawaii unit traffic court system Jan. 18 and will soon attend magistrate court for follow on training.

Military personnel will start reporting into their unit magistrates once the commands have finished preparing for the new system.

According to Jordan, while military personnel will now receive punishment for traffic violations from their command, a point matrix guides assessment of points and punishment.

Chapter eight of the order contains all information on changes to driving violations and the new punishments for certain violations.

The point system for violations remains the same.

Drivers are allowed 12 points against their license before losing it, but now certain violations carry heavier point values.

According to Rodolfo Gutierrez, traffic court bailiff, Marine Corps Base Hawaii Kaneohe Bay, the new punishments are harsher.

"Before, if you were talking on a cell-phone while driving, it was just two points," said Gutierrez. "Now, it's a mandatory seven-day suspension of driving privileges on base, and the violator must attend a driver's improvement class."

Cellphone usage while driving isn't the only violation to see an increase in punishment.

The new order also states that exceeding the posted speed limit by more than 15 miles per hour will result in a 30-day suspension of base driving privileges.

Many other violations now carry mandatory court time.

Although a point matrix guides punishment for violations, it will still be up to each unit magistrate to handle each violator accordingly.

Gutierrez said, "The instruction changed and now the unit magistrates have the power to assess the violation and punish as they see fit."

Newest Sergeant Major of Marine Corps named

Press Release

United States Marine Corps

WASHINGTON — Sergeant Major Carlton W. Kent was named as the next Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps by Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James T. Conway during a command visit to Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan 19.

Kent, who is currently the I Marine Expeditionary Force sergeant major, will become the 16th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, succeeding Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada who has held the position since June 2003.



KENT

Weekend weather outlook

Today



Day — Mostly sunny, with a high near 79. East wind around 9 mph.

Night — Mostly clear, with a low around 64. South wind around 8 mph.

High — 79

Low — 64

Saturday



Day — Mostly sunny, with a high near 78. East wind around 7 mph.

Night — Isolated showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 64. West wind around 13 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20%.

High — 78

Low — 64

Sunday



Day — Scattered showers. Partly cloudy, with a high near 77. West wind around 16 mph, with gusts as high as 22 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Night — Mostly clear, with a low around 65. West wind around 14 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

High — 77

Low — 65



File photo

A Marine fires a round into one of the many targets placed throughout the Military Operations in Urban Terrain course at Range 111 at Twentynine Palms, Calif., during Mojave Viper. This year, Marines from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment will be going through this training in preparation for their upcoming deployment to Iraq. Marines from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment also fine tuned their combat skills during their training operations at Twentynine Palms last year.

‘Lava Dogs’ head to Twentynine Palms

Cpl. Rick Nelson
Combat Correspondent

Marines assigned to 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, are scheduled to deploy to Marine Corps Air Ground Force Training Command, Twentynine Palms, Calif., Jan. 28 to train for their upcoming deployment to Iraq.

While there, they will participate in Mojave Viper, a training exercise that takes place in a desert environment.

The exercise will train Marines for situations they could encounter while on deployment.

According to Gunnery Sgt. Donald J. Vollmer, assistant operations chief, S-3, Headquarters and Service Company, 1/3, instructors at Twentynine Palms will present his Marines with scenarios similar to those they will face in Iraq.

"The Marines have to react to what they throw at them," said Vollmer.

The 1/3 advanced party left for the training area Wednesday, in order to get the area situated so the transition for the Marines from Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, to California will be easier.

"There's approximately 54 advanced-party Marines going out to Mojave Viper," said Cpl. Theodore A. Gina, administrative clerk, Headquarters and Service Company, 1/3.

"Out of those Marines (some) of them will leave straight from Mojave Viper to Iraq. This means, once they leave for Twentynine Palms, they won't be back in Hawaii until sometime in (the fall)."

During desert training, the Lava Dogs will conduct several live-fire training evolutions, from squad to platoon size, Military Operations in Urban Terrain

courses, and company training, added Vollmer.

"In Hawaii there's not a lot of live-fire training ranges, so the live ranges Mojave Viper offers helps out our battalion," said the native of Albany, Ore. "In my opinion, I think the MOUT facility will help the Marines out the most, because it's the most realistic training they can do before being deployed."

Vollmer said he thinks the hardest part for the Lava Dogs well be getting used to the cold weather.

"All the Marines are used to Hawaii's nice tropical climate," said the 38-year-old, "so the cold weather will probably have the biggest effect on their training."

"All in all, Mojave Viper is a great training tool and evolution, that the Marine Corps has. Training wise, once it is completed the Marines from 1/3 will be very prepared. Our tempo has been continuous, so they're all well trained, and after this we will be exactly where we need to be before we deploy."



File photo

Two Marines assigned to 2nd Platoon, Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, stop a suspicious vehicle at a vehicle checkpoint during their Mojave Viper training in Twentynine Plams, Calif., last year. The sport utility vehicle had a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device strapped to the bottom of the vehicle to enhance the realism of the training exercise.



File photo

Second Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Marines detain a suspected insurgent at a training site in Twentynine Palms, Calif., where the Island Warriors were participating in exercise Mojave Viper last year.



File photo

A Marine assigned to 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment's Scout Sniper Platoon, focuses in on a target at Range 400, Twentynine Palms, Calif., during a training exercise last year.

Marines, Iraqi soldiers recover M-16A4 rifle

Cpl. Luke Blom
Combat Correspondent

Editor's Note: This article was originally written in October; however, its publication was postponed due to operational security reasons.

HADITHA, Iraq — U.S. Marines and Iraqi soldiers serving in Haditha, Iraq, recovered an M-16A4 service rifle from insurgents, Oct. 11, 2006.

Marines from Hawaii-based Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, detained one insurgent and killed another when they engaged insurgents in Haditha, a city of approximately 30,000 located along the

Euphrates River in the western reaches of Iraq's Al Anbar Province.

The recovered rifle belonged to a Marine scout sniper from 3rd Battalion, 25th Regiment, a Marine Corps reserve battalion based in Brook Park, Ohio, which was ambushed in Haditha Aug. 1, 2005.

The 3/25 scout sniper team was conducting counterinsurgency operations in Haditha when insurgents, one of whom escaped with the Marine's rifle, overran their position.

Sergeant John D. Hunsberger, a 27-year-old from Parker, Colo., said that justice was served when U.S. and Iraqi forces recovered the rifle.

"It's a tragedy – what happened to the scout snipers from 3/25 – and it's hard to think of someone using our own weapon against us," said Hunsberger, who is part of a military transition team in Haditha. "But we got the weapon back and took a couple bad guys off the street."

Along with the seized M-16, the Marines and Iraqi soldiers also confiscated the insurgents' vehicle, a video camera and black ski masks.

When Hunsberger's team tracked the vehicle, engaged it with small-arms fire and detained one insurgent, they discovered the stolen U.S. service rifle.

"I was really surprised

when I saw an M-16 instead of an AK-47," said Hunsberger. "Immediately, I knew that these guys shouldn't have this weapon."

When word spread of Hunsberger's discovery, reaction from U.S. Marines in Haditha was immediate:

"I'm not going to lie – it was exciting to get the rifle back and get (the insurgents) off the streets," said Capt. Matthew Tracy, the 32-year-old Echo Company commander, from Hartford, Conn. "All the Marines in the company were excited when they heard the news."

"The fact that we got back one of our rifles makes it all the more satisfying," said Lance Cpl. Zachary Drill,

infantryman and 21-year-old native of Three Lakes, Wis.

The Marines weren't the only ones excited to have one less group of insurgents operating in Haditha.

Iraqi soldiers, who have been searching for this particular group of insurgents for some time, were also visibly enthusiastic at the news of the apprehension.

"We are all very happy that the snipers were caught," said "Hamud, an Iraqi soldier and squad leader who was involved in the detainment of the insurgents. "These people have shot many times at both Iraqis and Americans, so this is very good news."

"The Iraqi Army soldiers performed like I've seen them perform everyday out here – very well," said Tracy. "Marines have fought side by side with them for almost three years, and the way they're performing right now would make any Marine proud."

For the Marines, the catch is a bit of payback.

"The Marines definitely felt a little personal about these (insurgents), but they handled themselves with complete professionalism," added Tracy. "We felt like we achieved some justice for the Marines of 2/3 and 3/25 who have been injured by these guys."



Marines and Sailors from Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, sight in through their ACOGs mounted atop their M16A4 service rifles at the 500 yard line during a training exercise at the Kaneohe Bay Range training facility last year.

Standing by



Lance Cpl. Johnathan Tabb

An MV-22 'Osprey' flies over the Marine Medium Tiltrotor Training Squadron 204 flightline as others sit on the tarmac at Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C. Marines transitioning from the CH-46E to the new MV-22 go through VMMT-204 for training before joining an operational squadron.

BETTER, from A-1

The regiment was responsible for providing security to more than 30,000 square miles in Al Anbar province that stretches from the Iraq’s borders with Syria and Jordan east for hundreds of miles to the city of Hit located 30 miles northwest of Ramadi.

Regimental Combat Team 7 will be relieved by the North Carolina-based Regimental Combat Team 2 as part of a regularly scheduled rotation of troops that occurs yearly in the Al Anbar province.

In 12 months, the Marines of RCT-7 have recruited more than 3,000 Iraqi police officers to provide security and eventually relieve Coalition Forces of that task in western Al Anbar province, where insurgents launch daily attacks against U.S. and Iraqi Forces.

Despite threats and violence from insurgents, local men in the province have continued to volunteer to join local police forces – proof that the Iraqi people want a future for Iraq – not a future with Coalition Forces, but a future with Iraq, said Dowling, a native of Houston, Texas.

About 138 Iraqis were recruited last month from the regiment’s area of operation and sent to police academies located in Jordan, where new recruits spend eight weeks training before they return to their hometowns as policemen.

“(Iraqis can have) a brighter future by having Iraqi Forces there, having the IP’s there and working with the sheiks from the tribes,” said Dowling.

When RCT-7 arrived in Iraq last January, the Marines faced multiple counts of daily small-arms fire and improvised explosive device attacks. The entire western portion of the province lacked even one policeman, according to Dowling.

In the midst of these insurgent attacks, RCT-7 and its Iraqi counterparts have captured more than 2,000 insurgents and located more than 400 insurgent weapons and munitions caches. This was accomplished through thousands of foot and vehicle patrols.

“We have challenged the enemy in all locations,” said Dowling. “We have taken his ability to logistically supply himself.”

Security conditions in Western Al Anbar province have improved enough so that families are now walking down the streets with their children, city councils are meeting regularly with U.S. and Iraqi forces to discuss infrastructure projects, agriculture and economy is beginning to flourish in some areas, according to Dowling.

A year ago, most Iraqi families in the Western Al Anbar province would not leave their houses, said Dowling.

“(Iraqis) are seeing that being with the insurgency, being with foreign fighters is not the future, but being with a peaceful nation, a nation that can build, an agrarian and industrial nation in itself is the way to go,” said Dowling.

Some of the 3,000 Iraqi police officers, who are a mixture of Sunnis and Shiites, are providing security along with Coalition Forces in the Haditha Triad region and Baghdadi, which was once a hotbed of insurgent activity. The Triad and Baghdadi cities are located in the heart of the Sunni-dominated Al Anbar province along the Euphrates River 120 miles northwest of Baghdad.

Dowling said recruiting local police was a challenge because of the threats of murder and kidnapping by insurgents. Anyone who spoke or cooperated with Coalition Forces faced being murdered or kidnapped by insurgents.

Earlier last year, insurgents in front of a police station in the Al Anbar province killed several Iraqi police recruits. An Iraqi police chief in Rawah, a city of about 30,000 northwest of Haditha, was beheaded last June. Twice explosive-laden insurgent suicide bombers attacked Iraqi police stations in Husaybah, located just east of the Iraq-Syria border.

According to RCT-7 news reports, police remained vigilant and most remained on the job or returned shortly after the attacks.

During a recent operation, Operation Majid, more than 2,000 North Carolina-based Marines joined RCT-7 Marines to clear and hold several cities in the Haditha Triad region.

Marines who patrolled the cities reported a 90 percent decrease in insurgent attacks due to the construction of an 8-foot dirt wall around the cities and key entry control points that was built to keep insurgents out.

All vehicles coming into and leaving the cities were inspected for weapons and insurgents. A similar dirt wall was constructed around Anah, a city of 25,000 east of Haditha.

With the extra security established, 13 Iraqis recently walked up to the Marines’ forward operating base in Haditha and asked to join the police force. They were screened, recruited, and sent to the training academy in Jordan.

Along with growing police forces, city council meetings are being held with Coalition Forces in Rawah for the first time in six months and more are being scheduled. A bank and courthouse were also opened.

“We have to win the confidence of local leaders,” said Crowe. “A lot of these engagements take time. Due to murder and intimidation, that is a challenging aspect of our task.”

In Hit, one tribe alone had 800 men volun-



Cpl. Luke Blom

Marines from Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, conduct a security patrol through a street in the Al Anbar province of Iraq.

teer to join the police force and also committed close to 300 volunteers for the Iraq Army, said Crowe.

But Crowe said that recruiting police in the region has also become less of a challenge because Iraqis are realizing that peace and stability can be achieved by having Iraqi Security Forces.

“We’ve built the Iraqi Police, we’re building their police stations, we’ve equipped them with hundreds of vehicles, and we’re supplying them with the accoutrements of war,” he said.

Moreover, policemen have received equipment such as helmets and small arms with RCT-7’s assistance, and have been trained by Special Weapons and Tactics teams. Nearly 100 Iraqi police officers and soldiers were also trained and Iraqi government-certified as medics.

Dowling credits RCT-2, which operated in Western Al Anbar in 2005, with providing RCT-7 a balanced area of operations that was conducive to recruiting policemen by giving them a foothold in Al Anbar.

That was achieved when eight U.S. and Iraqi military battalions ousted insurgents from and secured Al Qa’im, located along the Syrian border, and wiping out insurgents and foreign fighters throughout key locations in the region, said Dowling.

“We held that with one American battalion ... and three Iraqi battalions that gave the local population the confidence to back their government and stand up a police force that

today is over 1,400 Iraqi Police that are well-trained, well-equipped and well-led,” added Crowe.

Dowling said Iraqi soldiers and police are able to spot insurgents much quicker than Coalition Forces – a plus of Iraqis providing their own security.

“Some of the best people to do that are the Iraqi (soldiers) because they know foreign fighters’ dialects, they know the towns’ people, (and) they know how Iraqis act,” said Dowling.

Although security in the region has stabilized in the last year, Dowling said the biggest challenge for RCT-2 is to “keep the momentum going.”

“Good things are happening out here,” said Crowe to reporters during his recent Pentagon Press Corps briefing. “I can walk you down streets that you would never walk down before. I can show you the most prosperous market where, on market day, six to 10,000 people come in from the desert ... to go to the market to buy their goods.”

On the eve of RCT-7’s deployment to Iraq last January, Crowe gave words of encouragement to his troops, a short phrase he repeated nearly a year later during his Pentagon Press Corps briefing.

“We don’t plan to fail. We didn’t come here to tie, and we didn’t come here to lose. We came here to win,” said Crowe. “I’m extremely proud of what the Marines, soldiers and Sailors of Regimental Combat Team have done this past year.”

Parents dedicate Marine's Medal of Honor to all service members

Staff Sgt. Scott Dunn
Headquarters Marine Corps

WASHINGTON — The Medal of Honor awarded Jan. 11 at a recent White House ceremony belongs to all service members, according to the parents of the man who earned the honor.

Corporal Jason L. Dunham of Scio, N.Y., posthumously received America's highest military decoration two years and nine months after succumbing to a mortal brain injury while fighting in Iraq. He served with Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, based in Twentynine Palms, Calif.

"We're accepting this honor for Jason, but we're also accepting this in all the servicemen and women's names," said mother Debra Dunham.

"Jason believed that all men on this earth should be free," said father Dan Dunham. "He also believed in his friends."

The Navy Medal of Honor, shared with the Marine Corps, is a bronze medallion hanging from an anchor sewn to a sky-blue ribbon. Presented posthumously, it is encased in oak and glass; otherwise, its bearer would wear it around his neck. But the latest Marine bestowed with the honor was not present in the flesh.

In spirit, on the other hand, Dunham filled every corner of the White House.

"We wish that Jason would have been able to be here so we could watch him," said Debra. "But we know he's watching."

In a lively reunion of sorts, more than 80 Marines from Dunham's unit soaked up their stately surroundings – many with digital cameras.

Louning about the White

House and bedecked in dress blues, the men laughed and cried as a band of brothers, a bond forged in combat, according to Maj. Trent Gibson, who was Dunham's company commander.

Six venerable Medal of Honor recipients attended the ceremony, as well as some of America's highest military and government figures.

Seated among others in the East Room were Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Bob Gates, Senator John McCain, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Gen. Peter Pace, and Marine Corps Commandant Gen. James Conway.

Before the citation was read, President George W. Bush gave personal praise to Jason: "He had a natural gift for leadership, and a compassion that led him to take others under his wing. The Marine Corps took the best of this young man, and made it better."

Bush said Jason represented the best of young Americans.

The room came to attention as the president took his position beside the mother. The narrator began reciting: "The President of the United States, in the name of the Congress, takes pride in presenting the Medal of Honor posthumously to ..."

Hearing her son's name, Debra's body began wrenching slightly, apparently trying to contain her emotions. With a tearful president at her left and Dan at her right, Debra held their hands throughout the citation – or they held hers. Dan and Debra's three children stood behind them.

The citation went on: "By his undaunted courage, intrepid fighting spirit, and unwa-

vering devotion to duty, Corporal Dunham gallantly gave his life for his country ..."

With the citation given, Bush presented the encased medal to the family.

Acknowledging all service members afterward, the father said, "Their names are all attached to this medal. They're all courageous. They all have valor. It's something that I want them all to know: They're part of this medal. It's as much theirs as it is Jason's."

Wall Street Journal reporter Michael M. Phillips, who covered the war in Iraq alongside Dunham's unit, also attended the ceremony. Phillips first introduced Dunham's story to a mass audience with a front-page article published May 25, 2004. He later wrote the unabridged story in "The Gift of Valor; A War Story," which narrates Jason's life and death, from growing up in Scio, to giving his life in service to country, to an eight-day journey home battling his wounds.

On April 14, 2004, in Iraq near the Syrian border, the corporal used his helmet and his body to smother an exploding Mills Bomb let loose by a raging insurgent whom Dunham and two other Marines tried to subdue.

The explosion dazed and wounded Lance Cpl. William Hampton and Pfc. Kelly Miller. The insurgent stood up after the blast and was immediately killed by Marine small-arms fire.

After the grenade exploded under Dunham's helmet, he lay face down with a few tiny pieces of shrapnel lodged in his head. The hard, molded mesh that was his Kevlar helmet was now scattered yards

around into clods and shredded fabric. Dunham never regained consciousness and died eight days later at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., with his mother and father at his bedside. He was 22.

Dunham, buried in Scio, is the second warrior and first Marine to earn the medal since the war in Iraq began. On April 4, 2003, during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Army Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith posthumously earned the medal for organizing a defense that held off a company-sized attack on more than 100 vulnerable coalition soldiers.

In the defense, Smith manned a .50 caliber machine gun in an exposed position until he was mortally wounded.

Before Dunham, the last Marine actions to earn the medal happened May 8, 1970, in Vietnam, according to Marine Corps History Division records. A Medal of Honor citation details Lance Cpl. Miguel Keith's machine-gun charge that inspired a platoon facing nearly overwhelming odds: Wounded, Keith ran into "fire-swept terrain." Wounded again by a grenade, he still attacked, taking out enemies in the forward rush.

Keith fought until mortally wounded; his platoon came out on top despite being heavily outnumbered.

The last Marine to receive the Medal of Honor was Maj. Gen. James L. Day, who distinguished himself as a corporal in the Battle of Okinawa in 1945. On Jan. 20, 1998, more than half a century later, President Bill Clinton presented the medal to Day, who passed away that year.

OSPREY, from A-1

coordination effort, they continue to train in support of, and gain the approval of Marines, as they push toward a scheduled 2007 deployment in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

"We need the Osprey. It's the future technology of aviation. Now we've taken things a step farther from fixed wing and rotary. We look forward to it because of the increased capabilities it brings to flight," said Col. Alan B. Will, 2nd MLG Inspector.

BOOKS, from A-1

"It feels really rewarding knowing that education still has involvement from people that don't have children who go to this school and that continuing education is a responsibility, and that is reflected by their gift," said Ostrem. "These books will be in our library, and the librarian is going to arrange it so that they're going to be out in a special place of honor, so that the children and parents can access these books."

Sheri said receiving the

books was a great gift for the children who attend the school.

"It was nice that even the civilian leaders gave something to the military children," said Sheri. "I thought that was really special."

Ostrem agreed, saying, "I want to express my gratitude and appreciation to our military personnel and civilian personnel who can bring new excitement and love for reading to our library. This is a great gift to our children and our school."

Laying bricks



Lance Cpl. Edward C. deBree

David Lagmay lays new bricks at the base of the Pacific War Memorial, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Jan. 17.